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There's more than one way to buy or sell a practice

The latest in equine management

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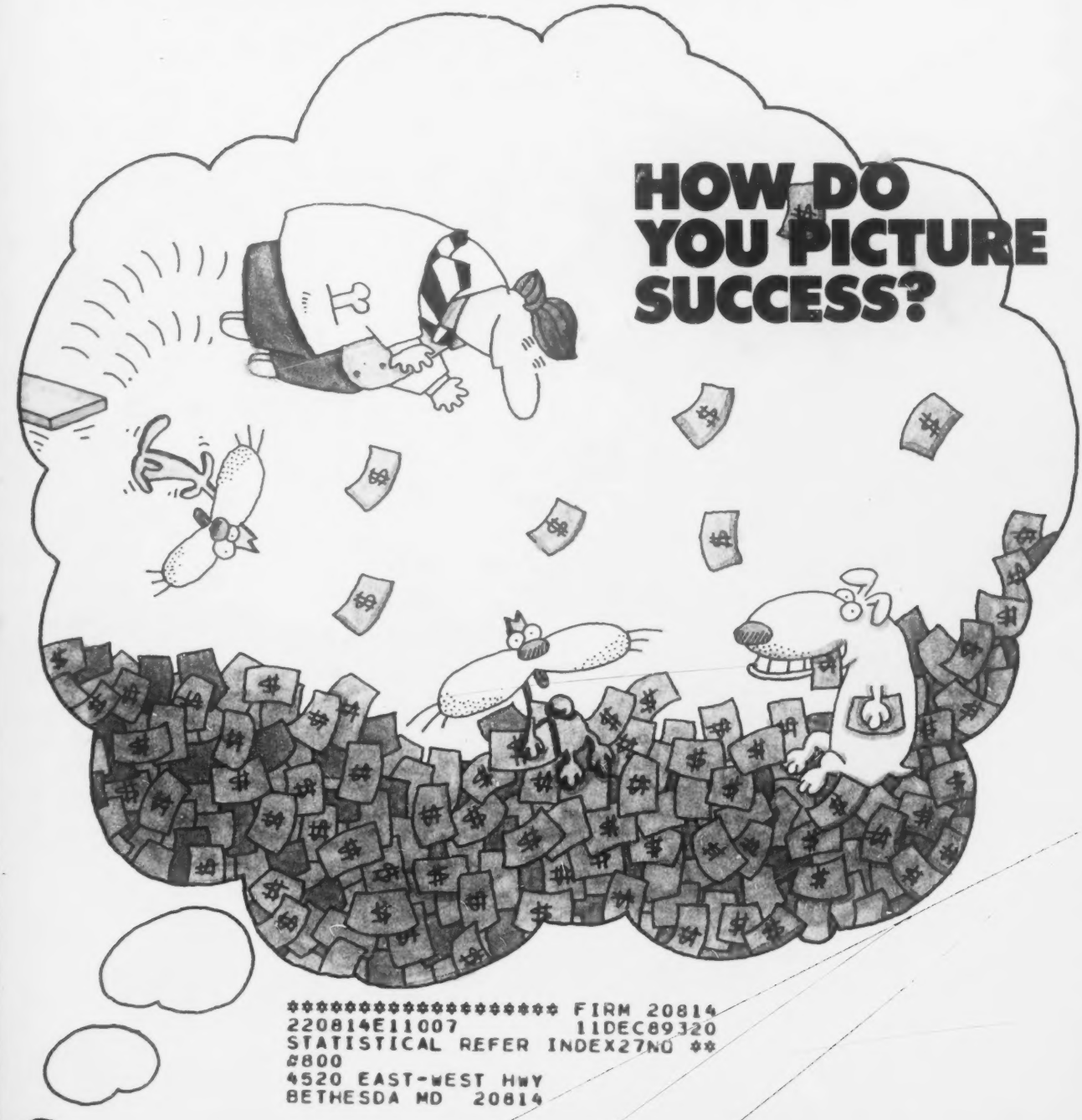
AUGUST 1989

veterinary economics

THE MAGAZINE OF PRACTICE MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE



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MEMO FROM THE EDITOR

Seize the day

In the recent movie, *Dead Poets' Society*, Robin Williams plays John Keating, who exhorts his law-and-medical-school-bound students to "seize the day," to refuse to conform to someone else's notion of what they should be. His message, in part, is for them to excel at what makes them happy and to turn convention on its head. They *alone* must define and create their successes.

To be sure, management consultant Don Dooley is more subtle; I doubt that he'd ask you to stand on your desks—as Keating asks his students to do—just to see your practices from a different perspective. But in this month's cover story, he explains that he, too, has a problem with conventional notions of success. Who is to say, he wonders, if gross income alone is a healthy—or even a valid—measure of how well you are doing?

Strange, I know, coming from a magazine that makes a habit of searching out and reporting veterinary income. But Dooley's message is not to abandon your quest for the green stuff, but to enlarge your notion of what success really means. His analysis defies statistical or empirical proof; he just wants you to stop for a minute and think about where you are going and why—and if your journey is a pleasant one. How much consideration *do* you give to happiness and satisfaction?

In organizing this month's articles, I worried that Dooley's message calls into question everything else we say in this issue; surely financing the sale of a veterinary practice is a crass endeavor compared to the loftier task of being happy. But as I reviewed each piece, I realized that most of them do in fact capture the spirit that Dooley describes. He says that to be satisfied with what you are doing is a *choice*; I'll add that there is nothing wrong with choosing to do it well.

Becky Turner

Rebecca R. Turner

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tineoplastics experienced a 20 to 30 percent higher risk of infertility than those having less contact with these chemicals. And about 13 percent of the respondents reported some difficulty in becoming pregnant since graduation. Researchers say the risks may be underestimated because actual exposure is difficult to measure.

Although he warns that further study is needed, researcher John Wilkins says that DVMs need to be more aware of potential health hazards, especially since females make up almost half of many veterinary classes.

"It's too early to say there's a definite infertility risk," Wilkins says, "but we think the evidence suggests potential problems."

DID YOU KNOW . . ?

●Veterinary school enrollment dropped by 136 students in the 1988-1989 academic year. Colorado State University boasted the most students with 498, while Oregon State University showed the lowest number—142. The total 1988-1989 enrollment in U.S. and Canadian veterinary schools: 9,718, of which 57.5 percent were women.

●August marks the scheduled beginning of a seven-month transcontinental trek across Antarctica by researchers and a team of 42 sled dogs. The purpose of the expedition, which is supported in part by Hill's Pet Products, is to dramatize the need for international cooperation in protecting Antarctica's fragile environment. Hill's is spearheading a nationwide campaign with veterinarians to alert the public to this journey, which also will be chronicled on five ABC television specials.

● THE DAILY LOCAL NEWS in West Chester, Pa., now runs "full-length, lovingly reported" obituaries of deceased pets. News Editor John DeSanto says, "They're really little stories about peoples' relationships with animals. They really get into peoples' hearts." For more on how you can help your clients through the grief process, see page 64.

A SHORT COURSE ON THE STATE OF THE HORSE

United States horse population	6,600,000*
Number of horse-owning households	2,600,000
Number of horse-owning households with children	1,638,000
Number of horse owners who own dogs	1,950,000
Number of horse owners who own cats	1,716,000
Area of highest horse ownership	The West
Area of lowest horse ownership	The Northeast
Number of horse owners who obtain veterinary care	1,232,400
Mean cost per veterinary visit	$65.27
Mean annual expense per household	$120.75
Total annual expense for equine care in the U.S.	$329,800,000

Source: Charles, Charles Research Group, 1988

*Does not include those owned by commercial operations or other organizations.